

Please type a plus sign (+) inside this box → ☐Approved for use through 09/30/2000. OMB 0651-0032
Patent and Trademark Office: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.**UTILITY
PATENT APPLICATION
TRANSMITTAL**

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. PACFI-001C1

First Inventor or Application Identifier Paul H. Bennett

Title TAMPER-EVIDENT CONTAINER CLOSURE

Express Mail Label No. E1531408102US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☒ * Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☒ Specification [Total Pages 43]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
- Descriptive title of the invention
 - Cross References to Related Applications
 - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
 - Reference to Microfiche Appendix
 - Background of the invention
 - Brief Summary of the invention
 - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
 - Detailed Description
 - Claim(s)
 - Abstract of the Disclosure
3. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 3]
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 1]
- a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
- b. ☒ Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 16 completed)
- i. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).

* NOTE FOR ITEMS 1 & 3: IN ORDER TO BE ENTITLED TO PAY SMALL ENTITY FEES, A SMALL ENTITY STATEMENT IS REQUIRED BY C.F.R. § 1.201, EXCEPT IF ONE FILED IN A PRIOR APPLICATION IS RELIED UPON BY C.F.R. § 1.201.

ADDRESS TO:Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Application
Washington, DC 20231

5. ☐ Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
6. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary)
- a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
- b. ☐ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
- c. ☐ Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

7. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
8. ☐ 37 C.F.R. § 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee) ☒ Power of Attorney
9. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
10. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
11. ☒ Preliminary Amendment
12. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
- * Small Entity
13. ☐ Statement(s) ☒ Statement filed in prior application, Status still proper and desired (PTO/SB/09-12)
14. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed)
15. ☐ Other: For CON; DIV; CIP: Extension of Time Petition (if needed)

16. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment:

☒ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No. 09,014,075

Prior application information: Examiner S. Cronin Group / Art Unit: 3207

For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Eox 4b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.

17. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS☒ Customer Number or Bar Code Label

007663

or ☐ Correspondence address below

(Insert Customer No. or Attach bar code label here)

| | | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| Atty: Name | Mark B. Garred, Esq. | | | | |
| Address | STETINA BRUNDA GARRED & BRUCKER 24221 Calle de la Louisa, 4th Flr. | | | | |
| City | Laguna Hills | State | CA | Zip Code | 92653-3642 |
| Country | U.S.A. | Telephone | (949) 855-1246 | Fax | (949) 855-6371 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Name (Print/Type) | Mark B. Garred, Esq. | Registration No. (Attorney/Agent) | 34,823 |
| Signature | <i>[Signature]</i> | Date | 11/16/99 |

Burden Hour Statement: This form is estimated to take 0.2 hours to complete. Time will vary depending upon the needs of the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you are required to complete this form should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Box Patent Application, Washington, DC 20231.

Case No.: PACFI-001C1
Patent Appln.
Certificate of Mailing:

"Express Mail" mailing label number EL531408102US

Date of Deposit November 16, 1999

I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service
"Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 CFR 1.10 on the date indicated
above and is addressed to the Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Trista Dunn

(Typed or printed name of person mailing paper or fee)

(Signature of person mailing paper or fee)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Paul H. Bennett, et al.)
Serial No.: Unknown) Group No.: 3207
Filed: Herewith) Examiner: S. Cronin
For: TAMPER-EVIDENT CONTAINER CLOSURE)

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS
WASHINGTON D C 20231

Dear Sir/Madam:

Prior to the initial examination of the above-identified
continuation patent application, please amend the application as
follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On Page 2, please insert the following before the Backround of
the Invention section:

--RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is a continuation of U.S. Application
Serial No. 09/014,075, entitled TAMPER-EVIDENT CONTAINER CLOSURE
filed January 27, 1998, which is a continuation of U.S. Application

Serial No. 08/697,272, entitled TAMPER-EVIDENT CONTAINER CLOSURE filed August 21, 1996, and now U.S. Patent No. 5,711,443 issued January 27, 1998.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-30.

Please add the following new claims into prosecution:

31. (New) A tamper evident closure for a container having a neck defining an open upper end and a annular shoulder extending about the neck in a close proximity to the open upper end thereof, the tamper evident closure comprising:

a sealing cap attachable to the neck in a manner enclosing the open upper end thereof;

a tamper evident cap cooperatively engaged to the sealing cap and including a selectively fracturable parting region which, when fractured, allows at least a portion of the tamper evident cap to be separated and removed from the sealing cap; and

a closure retaining section coupled to the sealing cap and advanceable over the shoulder of the container upon the attachment of the sealing cap to the neck thereof;

the tamper evident closure being sized and configured relative to the container such that the movement of sealing cap away from the shoulder subsequent to the attachment of the

sealing cap to the neck results in the engagement of the closure retaining section to the shoulder and the fracture of the parting region.

32. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 31 wherein the tamper evident cap is cooperatively engaged to the sealing cap via interengaging serrations which are formed on the tamper evident cap and the sealing cap.

33. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 31 wherein the tamper evident cap includes a removable tear strip which defines the parting region thereof.

34. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 33 wherein:
the tear strip of the tamper evident cap extends between upper and lower cap portions thereof; and

the tamper evident cap is sized and configured relative to the sealing cap such that the removal of the tear strip therefrom allows for the separation and removal of the upper cap portion from the sealing cap.

35. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 34 wherein the closure retaining section is formed on the lower cap portion of the tamper evident cap.

36. (New) A tamper evident closure for a container having an externally threaded neck defining an open upper end and an annular shoulder extending about the neck in close proximity to the open upper end thereof, the tamper evident closure comprising:

an internally threaded sealing cap threadably engageable to the neck in a manner enclosing the open upper end thereof, the threadable engagement of the sealing cap to the neck being facilitated by the rotation of the sealing cap in a first direction;

a tamper evident cap cooperatively engaged to the sealing cap in a manner wherein the rotation of the sealing cap facilitates the rotation of the tamper evident cap, the tamper evident cap including a selectively fracturable parting region which, when fractured, allows at least a portion of the tamper evident cap to be separated and removed from the sealing cap; and

a closure retaining section coupled to the sealing cap and advanceable over the shoulder of the container upon the threadable engagement of the sealing cap to the neck thereof;

the tamper evident closure being sized and configured relative to the container such that the rotation of the sealing cap in a second direction opposite the first direction subsequent to the threadable engagement of the sealing cap to the neck results in the engagement of the closure retaining section to the shoulder and the fracture of the parting region.

37. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 36 wherein the tamper evident cap is cooperatively engaged to the sealing cap

via interengaging serrations which are formed on the tamper evident cap and the sealing cap.

38. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 36 wherein the tamper evident cap includes a removable tear strip which defines the parting region thereof.

39. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 38 wherein:
the tear strip of the tamper evident cap extends between
upper and lower cap portions thereof; and

the tamper evident cap is sized and configured relative
to the sealing cap such that the removal of the tear strip
therefrom allows for the separation and removal of the upper
cap portion from the sealing cap.

40. (New) The tamper evident closure of Claim 39 wherein
the closure retaining section is formed on the lower cap portion of
the tamper evident cap.

REMARKS

By the foregoing Preliminary Amendment, Applicant has amended the specification of the present application to include the priority data related thereto. Additionally, Applicant has canceled Claims 1-30 and added new Claims 31-40 into prosecution to more clearly recite the novel and unobvious aspects of the present invention. More particularly, new independent Claims 31 and 36 are closely analogous to, but slightly broader in scope than, the two

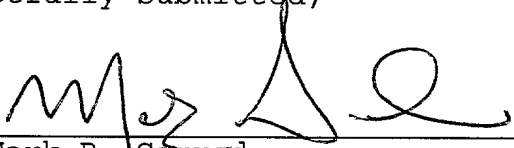
Case No: PACFI-001C1
Serial No: Unknown
Group Art Unit: 3207

independent claims deemed allowable in the parent application Serial No. 09/014,075. More particularly, in independent Claims 31 and 36 of the present application, the limitation regarding the tamper evident cap being cooperatively engaged to the sealing cap "in a manner resisting relative movement therebetween" has been deleted, with the closure retaining section being described as "coupled" to the sealing cap rather than "cooperatively engaged" thereto. Applicant respectfully submits that new independent Claims 31 and 36 are not anticipated or rendered obvious by any of the prior art references of record in the parent applications for the same reasons set forth in the Amendment filed May 3, 1999 in relation to the parent application Serial No. 09/014,075.

On the basis of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 31-40 are in condition for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 11/16/99

By: 
Mark B. Garred
Registration No. 34,823
STETINA BRUNDA GARRED & BRUCKER
24221 Calle de la Louisa
4th Floor
Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(949) 855-1246

Cust. No. 007663

MBG:td

amend\pacfi\preamend.1c1
111299\td

S P E C I F I C A T I O N

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that I, PAUL H. BENNETT, a citizen of the United States, residing at San Dimas, California, have invented a new and useful

TAMPER-EVIDENT CONTAINER CLOSURE

of which the following is a specification:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION: This invention relates generally to closures for containers and more particularly to an improved tamper-evident container closure.

5 DISCUSSION OF THE PRIOR ART: Containers of the kind with which this invention is concerned are used to contain a wide variety of products including both liquids and solids. These products may be divided into two broad categories which are (a) products for human consumption or application to the human body, such as
10 medicinal and non-medicinal liquids, solids, lotions, pills, capsules and the like, and (b) other products, such as household products and the like. This invention is particularly concerned with containers for category (a) products and will be described in the context of such containers. It will become
15 readily evident as the description proceeds, however, that the closure may also be used on containers for category (b) products. While such containers vary widely in shape and size, they are all characterized by a container body having a normally upper portion or end containing an opening through
20 which the container contents are accessed, and a closure in the form of a container sealing cap or the like to be secured to the upper portion or end of the container body for closing the opening. For convenience, this upper end portion of the container to which the container sealing cap is secured is
25 referred to as the neck of the container regardless of the container shape.

A relatively few years ago, containers of the character described were commonly closed by simple caps threaded or otherwise secured to the container necks. Over the years, tampering with such containers, particularly containers for the category (a) mentioned above, has become an ever increasing problem and danger. In many cases, tampering has involved the introduction of lethal substances into the containers which resulted in the deaths of persons who later consumed some of the container contents. For this reason, an ever increasing number of product containers of the kind described, particularly containers for category (a) products, are being made tamper-evident. In this context, tamper-evident means that it is readily evident from the appearance of the container closure whether or not the container has been previously opened.

A wide variety of ways have been devised to render containers tamper-evident. Following are some of these ways: enclosing a container in an outer tamper-evident package which cannot be opened without altering it in a manner which clearly indicates the package has been opened; evacuating and sealing a container in such a way that absence of the sound of air entering the container or some other sound resulting from the loss of container vacuum when the container is opened indicates the container has been previously opened; sealing a container with a tamper-evident closure which is torn, ruptured, or otherwise altered when opened.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention provides an improved tamper-evident closure for containers including an upper neck having an open normally upper end, and a circumferential shoulder about the neck below its upper end. This tamper-evident closure comprises a tamper-evident cap including a circumferential side wall having normally upper and lower ends, an upper end wall joined to the upper end of the side wall and closing the upper end of the cap, an opening in the lower end of the cap circumferentially surrounded by the lower end of said side wall, and cap retaining means on the lower end of the side wall engagable with the container shoulder to prevent upward removal of the cap from the container neck. The preferred cap retaining means are inwardly projecting resilient prongs which are spaced about the lower end of the cap side wall and are upwardly angled in a manner such that the container shoulder deflects these cap retaining prongs outwardly to permit the prongs to pass freely over the shoulder in the downward direction during placement of the cap on the container. The prongs then spring inwardly under the container shoulder to prevent upward removal of the cap from the container neck.

The side wall of the cap has a parting region extending circumferentially about the side wall between its ends at which the cap may be parted into upper and lower cap portions. These cap portions are joined along the circumferential parting region by junction means to which a

force may be applied to part the cap along the parting region. Parting of the cap along this parting region permits removal of the upper cap portion from the container by a legitimate user to uncover the container neck and provides an indication to a prospective buyer or legitimate user that the container has been previously opened. In the preferred embodiments of the invention described herein, this junction means comprises a tear strip which may be pulled to sever the cap along the parting region.

In one presently preferred embodiment of the tamper-evident closure described herein the tamper-evident cap is designed to be placed over the neck of a container having its own sealing cap. This tamper-evident cap is assembled on such a container by simply pushing the cap downwardly over the container neck and its sealing cap and serves as a tampering indicator only. Other preferred embodiments of the present tamper-evident closure described herein serve the dual purpose of a tampering indicator and a container seal. These dual purpose tamper-evident closures are designed for placement on containers which do not have their own sealing caps and include a tamper-evident cap similar to that of the single purpose tamper-evident closure mentioned above, and means within the cap for sealing the open upper end of container.

The preferred tamper-evident caps described herein have a frangible rupture line along the circumferential parting region of the cap which is stressed when any attempt is made to

remove the closure from the container in any other way than by exerting a proper cap parting force on the junction means of the cap. For example, any attempt to unscrew the tamper-evident cap from the container will stress the cap along the rupture line, and this stress will cause the cap to rupture along the rupture line to indicate to a prospective purchaser or legitimate user that the container has been previously opened.

The preferred dual purpose tamper-evident closures described are tamper-evident cap assemblies having an outer tamper-evident cap like that discussed above which provides a tamper indicator for the container and an inner container sealing cap. This inner sealing cap is rotatable with the outer tamper-evident cap and includes internal screw threads for engaging the screw threads on the container neck and sealing means for sealing the open upper end of the neck. During assembly of a dual purpose tamper-evident closure or cap assembly on a container, the inner sealing cap is rotatable by rotation of the outer tamper-evident cap to screw the inner cap onto the container neck. It will become evident as the description proceeds, however, that a dual purpose cap according to the invention could have a unitary cap design in which the inner screw threads and container sealing means within the outer tamper-evident cap are an integral part of this cap.

A tamper-evident closure of the invention may be used on containers intended to be sealed by various types of sealing

caps. For example, certain tamper-evident closures of the invention described herein are intended for use on containers which are normally closed by simple threaded sealing caps. Other described tamper-evident closures of the invention are intended for use on containers in the form of squeeze bottles which are normally closed by liquid dispensing caps.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 illustrates a tamper-evident closure according to the invention assembled on a container;

Figure 2 illustrates the tamper-evident closure and container in figure 1 in disassembled relation and shows the closure in axial cross-section;

Figure 3 is a view similar to figure 2 of a modified tamper-evident closure according to the invention;

Figures 5 and 6 are views similar to figure 1 of further modified tamper-evident closures according to the invention for liquid dispensing containers and showing the caps in axial cross-section;

Figure 7 illustrates the manner in which a tamper-evident closure according to the invention is parted to uncover the contents of the container on which the closure is mounted;

Figure 8 is a section taken on line 8-8 in figure 5;

Figure 9 is a section taken on line 9-9 in figure 7:

Figure 10 is a view looking in the direction of the arrows on line 10-10 in figure 6;

Figure 11 is a side elevation of a presently preferred tamper-evident container closure according to the invention;

Figure 12 is section taken on line 12-12 in figure 11;

Figure 13 is a longitudinal section through the closure in figure 11 taken on line 13-13 in figure 14:

Figure 14 is a section taken on line 14-14 in figure 13; and

Figure 15 is a perspective view showing the outer cap portion of the container closure of figure 11 grasped as a drinking vessel by the fingers of a user.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to these drawings and first to figures 1 and 2, there is illustrated a tamper-evident closure 10 according to the invention for a container 12. The container has a normally upper neck 14 with an open normally upper end 16. Extending about the neck a distance below its upper end is a circumferential shoulder 18. The particular tamper-evident closure 10 illustrated is a dual purpose tamper-evident closure which both seals the open upper end 16 of the container neck 14 and provides tamper-evident protection, that is a tampering indicator, for the container. In this regard, it was noted

evident" means that the closure serves as a tampering indicator which provides a clear indication to a purchaser or user whether or not the container has been previously opened.

5 The tamper-evident closure 10 comprises a tamper-evident cap 20 having normally upper and lower ends 22 and 24. a generally cylindrical side wall 26, and an upper end wall 28 joined to the upper end of the side wall and closing the upper end of the cap. The lower end of the cap is open. Joined to the lower end of the cap side wall 26, about the lower end opening in the cap, are cap retaining means 30 which engage the lower side of the container shoulder 18 to prevent upward removal of the tamper-evident cap 20 from the container neck 14.

10
15 The tamper-evident cap 20 includes upper and lower cap portions 32, 34, a parting region 36 extending circumferentially about the cap side wall 26 between these upper and lower cap portions at which the cap may be parted to separate the upper cap portion 32 from the lower cap portion 34, and junction means 38 joining the cap portions along the parting region. A force may be applied to this junction means to part the cap side wall 26 along the parting region 36 in a manner which serves the twofold purpose of indicating the container has been opened and permitting upward removal of the upper cap portion 32 from the container neck to enable a legitimate user to access the container contents.

20

The tamper-evident container closure 10 illustrated in figures 1 and 2 is a dual purpose closure which is designed for use on a container 12 that lacks its own sealing cap or other sealing means for sealing the open upper end of the container neck 14 but does have external screw threads 40 at the upper end of the neck. This dual purpose closure 10 includes internal screw threads 42 for engaging the container screw threads 40 and sealing means 44 for sealing the open upper end of the container neck 14. The tamper-evident closure 10 is assembled on the container 12 by placing the closure over the container neck 14 and rotating the tamper-evident cap 20 of the closure in a direction to screw the closure onto the container to a position wherein the closure is tightly secured to the neck and the sealing means 44 presses firmly against the upper end of the neck about the opening in the neck to seal the opening. During this assembly of the closure 10 on the container, the retaining means 30 pass freely over the container shoulder 18 in the downward direction to a position in which the retaining means engages the underside of the shoulder to prevent upward removal of the closure from the container. The container can be opened only by exerting an appropriate force on the junction means 38 to part the upper cap portion 32 of the closure from the lower cap portion 34 of the closure. The upper portion of the tamper evident closure 10 (i.e. the upper portion 32 of the closure cap 20 and the sealing means 44 within the cap) is then removable from the container by rotating the upper cap portion 32 in a direction to unscrew the upper closure portion from the container neck to access the contents of the container through the open upper end of the container neck 14.

Referring now in more detail to figures 1 and 2, the illustrated dual purpose tamper-evident closure 10 is a cap assembly including the tamper-evident cap 20, which constitutes an over cap or outer cap of the cap assembly, and an inner container sealing cap 46. The inner cap 46 engages the upper portion 32 of the outer cap 20 in such a way that the inner cap is rotatable with the outer cap. For example, the inner cap may be pressed into, bonded to, or otherwise permanently fixed within the upper portion of the outer cap. Alternatively, the two caps 20, 46 may be restrained against relative rotation by inter engaging serrations on the inner surface of the upper portion 32 of the outer cap 20 and the outer surface of the inner cap 46, as described in connection with figures 8 and 9, which serrations may or may not permit axial separation of the caps. In the particular closure embodiment illustrated, the inner cap 46 is assumed to have a sufficiently snug fit within the outer cap 20 to firmly fix the inner cap in the outer cap and restrain the caps against relative rotation. The outer cap 20 has a downwardly facing internal circumferential shoulder 47 along the upper edge of the circumferential parting region 36 engagable by an external circumferential bead or shoulder 49 about the lower end of the inner cap 46 to limit axial insertion of the inner cap into the outer cap 20. The container sealing means 44 of the tamper-evident closure 10 comprises a sealing pad within the upper end of the inner cap 46. The internal screw threads 42 of the closure 10 are on the inner surface of the inner cap. The outer cap may have external serrations to facilitate gripping and rotating the cap.

The cap retaining means 30 on the outer tamper-evident cap 20 comprises a plurality of upwardly angled, resiliently flexible prongs 48 circumferentially spaced about the inner side of and integrally joined to the lower end of the outer cap side wall 26. These prongs extend inwardly toward the longitudinal axis of the outer cap and upwardly toward the upper end of the outer cap at an oblique angle to the cap side wall 26. As shown in figure 2, the prongs 48 have inner end surfaces 50 which generally parallel the longitudinal axis of the outer cap 20 and intersect the upper surfaces of the prongs along relatively sharp edges 52 which are normally disposed substantially in a common plane transverse to the cap axis. As explained below, during assembly of the tamper-evident closure or cap assembly 10 on the container 12, the cap retaining prongs 48 flex upwardly and outwardly toward the outer cap wall 26 to permit the prongs to pass over the container shoulder 18. The prongs then spring inwardly below the shoulder to prevent upward removal of the cap assembly from the container.

The junction means 38 of the tamper-evident cap assembly 10 is a tear strip comprising a circumferential portion 54 of the outer cap side wall 26 between the upper and lower outer cap portions 32, 34. This portion 54 of the outer cap side wall 26 is joined to the upper and lower cap portions 32, 34 along circumferential frangible rupture or tear lines 56 formed by circumferential grooves 58 in the side wall 26 and slits in the side wall spaced along the grooves. Integrally joined to one end of the tear strip 38 is a pull tab 60 overlying an opening 61 in the cap side wall 26 which permits

grasping of the pull tab. The tear strip 38 may be pulled by grasping and pulling on the pull tab 60 to sever the outer cap side wall 26 along the tear lines 56. Severing the outer tamper-evident cap 20 in this way parts the cap along the parting region 36 in a manner which serves the twofold purpose of indicating the container has been opened and separating the upper cap portion 32 from the lower cap portion 34 to permit upward removal of the upper cap portion from the container 12.

The tamper-evident closure 10 is used in this way. The closure 10 is assembled on the container 12 by placing the closure axially downward over the upper end of the container neck 14 to an initial position in which the threads 44 on the inner cap 46 engage the threads 40 on the container. The outer cap 20 is then rotated to rotate the inner cap 46 relative to the container in a direction to screw the inner cap, and thereby the entire closure, onto the container. The closure is finally tightened to firmly press the inner cap seal 44 against the upper end 16 of the container neck 14 and thereby seal the container. During this assembly of the closure 10 on the container 12, the retaining prongs 48 on the outer tamper-evident cap 20 engage the container shoulder 18 and are deflected upwardly and outwardly by the shoulder to permit the prongs to pass over the shoulder. The prongs then spring inwardly below the shoulder to prevent upward movement of the cap assembly from the shoulder.

The container 12 can be easily opened by a buyer or user by grasping and pulling on the pull tab 60 to tear the tear strip 38 from the outer tamper-evident cap 20. The upper portion 32 of the outer cap 20 is thereby parted from the lower cap portion 34 to permit removal of the upper cap portion and the inner cap 46 from the container. Removal of the upper portion 32 of the outer tamper-evident cap 20 and the inner cap 46 from the container is accomplished by rotating the upper portion 32 of the outer cap in a direction to unscrew the inner cap 46 from the container. The container may be reclosed by replacing the inner cap 46 on the container after removing the inner cap from the outer cap portion 32, if this is possible, or along with the outer cap portion 32 in the event that this outer cap portion and the inner cap are permanently joined.

Obviously, any attempt to tamper with the container 12 by opening the container in the manner explained above would be immediately evident to a prospective purchaser or user. The container cannot, however, be opened in any other way for tampering purposes without the closure clearly evidencing such tampering. In this regard, the frangible rupture or tear lines 56 of the outer tamper-evident cap 20 are designed to rupture or tear if the a person seeking to tamper with the container attempts to open the container by simply unscrewing the closure 10. from the container. Thus, rotation of the closure in a direction to unscrew the inner sealing cap 46 from the container urges the inner cap shoulder 49 upwardly against the outer cap shoulder 47 and thereby urges the outer cap retaining prongs 48 upwardly against the lower side of the container shoulder 18. As a consequence, this rotation of the closure 10

urges the upper portion 32 of the outer cap 20 and inner cap 46 upwardly relative to both the container and the lower portion 34 of the outer cap and thereby stresses the outer cap along the frangible tear or rupture lines 56 of the outer cap. The outer cap is designed to rupture along one or both of these lines under this stress to indicate container tampering. As explained later in connection with figure 7, this feature of the tamper-evident closure also permits the closure to be opened by a purchaser or legitimate user by either rotating the outer cap of the closure in a direction to unscrew the inner sealing cap from the container or by pulling the closure tear strip.

It is evident from the foregoing description that if the inner sealing cap of the tamper-evident closure or cap assembly 10 of figures 1 and 2 is fixed within the outer tamper-evident cap 20, the closure is a dual purpose tamper-evident closure for use on a container 12 lacking its own sealing cap and provides both a sealing closure for sealing the container and a tampering indicator for evidencing tampering with the container. On the other hand, if the inner sealing cap 46 is separable from the outer tamper-evident cap 20 and forms part of the container 12, the tamper-evident closure 10 is a single purpose closure which provides tamper-evident protection only. In this disclosure, it is assumed that the tamper-evident closure 10 is a dual purpose closure in which the inner cap 46 is fixed within the outer cap 20 so that the closure both seals the container and provides a tampering indicator for the container.

The modified tamper-evident container closure 10a of figures 3 and 4 is designed for use on a container 12a having its own sealing cap 46a and is essentially identical to the tamper-evident closure 10 of figures 1 and 2 except that the inner sealing cap 46a of closure 10a is axially separable from the outer tamper-evident cap 20a and forms part of the container rather than part of the closure 10a. The outer cap is assembled over the inner cap in the manner described below. The inner cap 46a may be freely rotatable in the outer cap, or the outer and inner caps may be restrained against relative rotation, as by inter-engagable inner and outer longitudinal serrations on the inner and outer caps, respectively, similar to those described in connection with figures 8 and 9, which permit the outer cap to be placed over the inner cap in the manner described below and interengaged to prevent relative rotation of the caps. In the particular embodiment illustrated, the inner cap is rotatable within the outer cap. From the foregoing description, it is evident that the tamper-evident closure 10a comprises the tamper-evident cap 20a only and is a single purpose closure which functions as a tampering indicator only.

The modified tamper-evident closure 10a is used in this way. The container sealing cap 46a will be tightly threaded on the neck 14a of the container 12a to seal the upper open end of the neck, prior to assembly of the tamper-evident cap 20a on the container. The cap 20a is assembled on the container by simply pushing the cap downwardly over both the container neck 12a and the sealing cap 46a, on the neck to a

position in which the cap retaining prongs 48a engage under the container shoulder 18a. In this regard, it will be understood from the description to this point that when the tamper-evident cap 20a is pushed downwardly over the container neck, the retaining prongs 48a on the cap are deflected outwardly by the container shoulder 18a to permit the prongs to pass over the shoulder in much the same way as the prongs 48 in figures 1 and 2 are deflected outwardly by the container shoulder 18 when the closure 10 is screwed onto the container neck 14. The prongs 48a then spring inwardly under the shoulder to prevent upward removal of the cap 20a from the container. The caps 20a, 46a have engageable inner and outer shoulders 47a, 49a, respectively, like the earlier described caps 20, 46, which limit entry of the inner cap into the outer cap.

The container 12a is opened by first pulling the tear strip 38a of the tamper-evident cap 20a to part the upper cap portion 32a from the lower cap portion 34a in the same manner as explained in connection with figures 1 and 2. This releases the upper cap portion 32a for upward removal of this upper cap portion from the container. Removal of the upper cap portion 32a, in turn, exposes the container sealing cap 46a for removal from the container 12a by unscrewing the sealing cap from the container. Any attempt to force the tamper-evident cap 20a upwardly from the container without pulling the tear strip 38a for the purpose of tampering with the container will result in rupture of the cap along its tear lines 56a to indicate that such tampering has occurred.

Figure 5 illustrates a further modified tamper-evident container closure 10b according to the invention assembled on a container 12b. Closure 10b comprises a tamper-evident cap 20b identical to the tamper-evident caps 20, 20a of figures 1-4. Container 12b is identical to the containers 12, 12a of figures 1-4, except that container 12b is a squeeze bottle for containing a liquid or semi-liquid product. The upper open end of the container neck 14b is closed by a sealing cap 46b which, in this case, is a squeeze bottle dispensing cap like that described in patent No.5,145,094. As described in this patent, the intended use of the dispensing cap 46b requires that this cap remain on the container and be exposed to permit adjustment of dispensing cap between its open and closed positions and dispensing of the container contents through the cap. Accordingly, the dispensing cap 46b, like the sealing cap 46a in figures 3 and 4, is not permanently fixed within the tamper-evident cap 20b.

The dispensing cap 46b may be associated with the tamper-evident cap 20b in either of two different ways. According to one of these ways, the dispensing cap forms part of the container 12b and is placed on the container prior to and totally independent of placement of the tamper-evident cap 20b on the container. In this case, the tamper-evident cap 20b is internally sized to fit loosely or slidably over the dispensing cap 46b and is applied to the container 12b by pushing the tamper-evident cap downwardly over the container neck 14b and the dispensing cap 46b in the same manner as described above in connection with figures 3 and 4. According

to another way of associating the tamper-evident cap 20b and the container dispensing cap 46b, the dispensing cap forms part of tamper-evident closure 10b and is removably fitted within the upper portion 32b of the tamper-evident cap in such a way that the inner dispensing cap is rotatable with but axially separable from the outer tamper-evident cap, as explained in connection with figures 1 and 2. Both caps may then be assembled on the container 12b simultaneously by rotating the outer cap 20b in a direction to screw the inner cap 46b onto the container neck in much the same manner as described earlier in connection with figures 1 and 2. In both cases, the tamper-evident cap 20b provides a tamper indicator for the container 12b, and the upper portion 32b of the cap 20b is removed from the container 12b and its dispensing cap 46b to access the dispensing cap by first pulling the tear strip 38b to part the upper tamper-evident cap portion 32b from the lower cap portion 34b and then removing the upper cap portion upwardly from the dispensing cap.

The inner dispensing cap 46b may be removably and non-rotatably engaged within the outer tamper-evident cap 20b in various ways. According to the preferred practice of the invention, this is accomplished by providing the inner dispensing cap and the upper portion 32b of the outer tamper-evident cap with longitudinal serrations 62b, as shown in figure 8. These serrations slidably engage one another when the outer and inner caps are assembled, either by pushing the outer cap downwardly over the inner cap when placing the outer cap on the container 12b (if the inner cap forms part of and is previously assembled on the container), or by insertion of the

inner cap into the outer cap prior to placing either cap on the container (if the inner cap forms part of the closure 10b). The serrations 62b effectively key the two caps against relative rotation in such a way as to (a) enable the inner dispensing cap 46b to be screwed onto the container neck 14b by rotation of the outer tamper-evident cap 20b, (b) permit entry of the dispensing cap into the tamper-evident cap prior to or during assembly of the outer cap on the container, and (c) permit upward removal of the upper tamper-evident cap portion 32b from the dispensing cap after this upper cap portion has been severed from the lower cap portion 34b by pulling the tear strip 54b of the tamper-evident cap. The caps 20b, 46b have engagable inner and outer shoulders 47b, 49b, respectively, like the earlier described caps 20, 46 and 20a, 46a, which limit entry of the inner cap into the outer cap.

Figures 6 and 10 illustrate a further modified tamper-evident closure 10c according to the invention assembled on a container 12c. Closure 10c comprises a tamper-evident cap 20c identical, except for the differences noted below, to the tamper-evident cap 20b of figure 5. Container 12c is a squeeze bottle identical to the squeeze bottle container 12b of figure 5. The upper open end of the container neck 14b is closed by a sealing and dispensing cap 46c identical to the dispensing cap 46b of figure 5.

The tamper-evident cap 20c and dispensing cap 46c may be associated in either of the two different ways discussed above in connection with figure 5. Thus, the dispensing cap 46c

may form part of the container 12c and be placed on the container prior to and totally independent of placement of the tamper-evident cap 20c on the container. In this case, the tamper-evident cap 20c is pushed downwardly over the container neck 12c and the dispensing cap 46c. Alternatively, the dispensing cap 46c may be removably fitted into the upper portion 32c of the tamper-evident cap 20c in such a way that the inner dispensing cap forms part of the tamper-evident closure and is rotatable by rotation of the outer tamper-evident cap. In this latter case, both caps are assembled on the container 12c simultaneously by rotating the outer cap 20c to screw the inner cap 46c onto the container in the same way as described above in connection with figure 5. The tamper-evident cap 20c thus provides a tampering indicator for the container 12c, and the upper portion 32c of the cap 20c is removed from the container 12c and its dispensing cap 46b to access the dispensing cap by first pulling the tear strip 54c to part the upper tamper-evident cap portion 32c from the lower cap portion 34c and then removing the upper cap portion upwardly from the dispensing cap.

The tamper-evident cap 20c differs from the tamper-evident cap 20b of figure 5 only in the following respects. The upper end of the upper cap portion 32c of cap 30c is reduced in diameter and tapered to fit more closely about the upper end of the dispensing cap 46c, as shown. Also, the upper end of the upper cap portion contains a circular row of holes 64c for aiding molding of the cap 20c.

The modified tamper-evident closure 10d of figures 7 and 9 can be considered to be identical to either the closure 10 of figures 1 and 2 or the closure 10a of figures 3 and 4 except that the outer tamper-evident cap 20d and the inner container sealing cap 46d have inter-engaging serrations 62d (figure 9) like those in figure 8 to firmly secure the caps against relative rotation. The inner sealing cap 46d may be part of the outer tamper-evident cap 20d, in which case the inner cap is fixed within the outer cap, and the two caps are simultaneously assembled on the container 12d by rotating the outer cap to screw the inner cap on the container in the same manner as described in connection with figures 1 and 2. Alternatively, the inner cap 46d may be part of the container 12d, in which case the inner cap is assembled on the container prior to and independently of placement of the outer tamper-evident cap on the container, and the outer cap is assembled on the container by pushing the outer cap downwardly over the container neck and the inner cap in the same manner as described in connection with figures 3 and 4. In either case, the container 12d may be opened by tearing off the closure tear strip 38d and unscrewing the sealing cap 46d from the container in the same manner as explained earlier in connection with figures 1-4.

Figure 7 illustrates an alternative way of removing the outer tamper-evident cap 20d and the inner container sealing cap 46d from the container 12d by rotating the outer cap and hence the inner cap in a direction to unscrew the inner cap from the container. In this regard, it will be understood

that rotation of the caps in a direction to unscrew the inner cap from the container causes the inner cap to exert an upward thrust on the upper portion 32d of the outer cap by virtue of engagement of the outer bead or shoulder 49d on the inner cap with the inner shoulder 47d on the outer cap. The lower portion 34d of the outer cap, on the other hand, is fixed against upward movement relative to the container by engagement of the cap retaining prongs 48d with the container shoulder 18d. Accordingly, unscrewing the inner cap by rotating the outer cap in the manner described stresses the rupture lines 56d of the outer cap 20d in the axial direction of the outer cap. These rupture lines are designed to part under this stress, as illustrated in figure 7, to separate the upper portion 32d of the outer cap 20d from the lower portion of the latter cap and thereby permit removal of the inner sealing cap 46d from the container 12d. Any attempt to tamper with the container by removing the caps in this way will also cause parting of the outer cap to evidence such tampering.

Figures 11-14 illustrate the presently preferred tamper-evident container closure 10e of this invention. This preferred closure is generally similar to the earlier described tamper evident closures of the invention. Thus, the preferred closure 10e includes an outer tamper-evident cap 20e having upper and lower portions 32e, 34e, respectively, joined to one another along a circumferential parting region 36e by a circumferential junction means 38e forming a tear strip. This tear strip 38e may be pulled to sever the cap 20e along circumferential rupture or tear lines 56e and thereby separate the cap portions 32e, 34e. At the lower open end of the cap 20e

are cap retaining means 30e in the form of inwardly and upwardly extending prongs 48e joined to and spaced circumferentially about the lower end of the cap.

Within the outer tamper evident cap 20e is an inner container sealing cap 46e. As in the tamper evident closures of figures 1-4 and 7, the inner sealing cap 46e may be part of the outer tamper-evident cap 20e, in which case the inner cap may be separable from or fixed within the upper portion 32e of the outer cap and the two caps may be simultaneously assembled on the container by rotating the outer cap to screw the inner cap on the container in the same manner as described in connection with figures 1 and 2. Alternatively, the inner cap 46e may be part of the container, in which case the inner cap is separable from the outer tamper evident cap 20e and assembled on the container prior to and independently of placement of the outer cap on the container. The outer cap is then assembled on the container by pushing the outer cap downwardly over the container neck and the inner sealing cap, as described in connection with figures 3 and 4.

The tamper-evident cap 20e and the container sealing cap 46e differ from those of figures 1-4 and 7 in the following respects, Within the upper portion 32e of the tamper-evident cap 20e, the cap side wall 26e has a plurality of alternating, inner and outer longitudinal flute-like recesses or channels 70e, 72e, respectively, spaced circumferentially about the cap. These recesses, in turn, form a plurality of alternating, inner

and outer longitudinal ribs 74e, 76e, respectively, spaced circumferentially about the cap. The inner surfaces of the inner ribs are cylindrically curved to a common radius about the longitudinal axis of the cap 20e. The outer surfaces of the outer ribs are also cylindrically curved to a common radius about the longitudinal axis of the cap 20e. The inner ribs 74e have lower ends 78e located in a common plane transverse to the longitudinal axis of the cap 20e and forming within the cap downwardly facing shoulders 47e (only one shown) at the lower end of the upper cap portion 32e. Within the lower portion 34e of the cap 20e are a plurality of circumferentially spaced rectangular holes 80e in the cap side wall 26e aligned with the inner cap prongs 48e, respectively. The cap is injection molded from a suitable plastic, and the holes 80e are sized and shaped to receive retractable parts (not shown) of the injection mold which cooperate with other parts (not shown) of the mold to form the prongs 48e during the molding process. The outer ends of the side edges of each prong 48e are integrally joined to the lower ends of the side edges of the respective cap side wall hole 80e. The prongs are resiliently flexible to permit the prongs to pass over the shoulder (not shown) on the container neck (not shown) during assembly of the cap on the container in same way as explained in connection with the earlier described embodiments of the invention. Except for the differences noted above and other minor differences of shape and size, the tamper-evident cap 20e is essentially identical to and used in essentially the same way as the earlier described tamper-evident caps of figures 1-4 and 7.

The container sealing cap 46e is essentially identical to the earlier described sealing caps of figures 1-4 and 7 and differs from these earlier caps only in the following respects. The sealing cap 46e is cylindrically curved to an external radius approximating the common radius of curvature of the inner surfaces of the inner ribs 74e on the tamper-evident cap 20e. More specifically, the cap 46e is externally sized to have either a relatively snug fit or a somewhat loose or sliding fit within the upper portion 32e of the cap 20e depending upon whether the cap 48e is intended to remain in the upper cap portion 32e and form part of the tamper-evident closure 10e or is intended to be separable from the cap 20e and form part of the container. Circumferentially spaced about the exterior of the sealing cap 46e are pairs 82e of longitudinal spline-like ribs 84e which extend upwardly from the external bead or shoulder 49e about the lower end of the cap. The rib pairs 82e are sized and shaped to engage within certain of the inner recesses 72e in the tamper-evident cap 20e in the manner shown in figure 14 when the cap 20e is assembled over the sealing cap 46e. This engagement of the rib pairs 82e in the cap recesses 72e secures the caps 20e, 46e against relative rotation, whereby the sealing cap 46e is rotatable by the tamper-evident cap. The outer sealing cap shoulder 49e is engagable with the inner tamper-evident cap shoulders 47e to limit upward movement of the sealing cap in the tamper-evident cap.

From the above description, it is evident that the tamper-evident cap 20a and the container sealing cap 46e are assembled on a container (not shown) of the type described

earlier and are removable from the container in the same manner as explained in connection with figures 1-4 and 7. Accordingly, no further description of figures 11-14 is necessary.

Figure 15 illustrates an auxiliary use of the outer cap 20e of the tamper-evident container closure of figure 11, and shows it in use as a drinking vessel or cup being grasped by the hand of a user. Such use of the outer cap is particularly convenient for such purposes as the taking of prescription drugs or other medicaments provided in the container on which the container closure is provided.

I claim:

1. In combination:

2 a container including a normally upper neck having an open
normally upper end, and a circumferential shoulder about said
4 neck below said upper end having a normally lower side,

a tamper-evident closure for said container comprising a tamper-
6 evident cap positioned over said neck including a circumferential
side wall having normally upper and lower ends, an upper end wall
8 joined to the upper end of said side wall and closing the upper
end of the cap, an opening in the lower end of said cap
10 circumferentially surrounded by the lower end of said side wall,
and cap retaining means on the lower end of said side wall
12 engaging the lower side of said shoulder to prevent upward
removal of said cap from said container neck, and wherein

14 said cap side wall includes a parting region extending
circumferentially about said side wall between said side wall
16 ends at which the cap may be parted into a lower cap portion
which is fixed against upward removal from the container neck and
18 an upper cap portion which is removable upwardly from the neck to
provide access to the neck, and junction means joining said cap
20 portions along said parting region to which a force may be
applied to part said cap along said region in a manner which
22 provides a tampering indicator for the container and permits
upward removal of said upper cap end portion from said container
24 neck by a legitimate user.

2. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

- 2 said container neck has external screw threads between said
shoulder and said upper neck end, and
- 4 said closure includes internal screw threads within said upper
cap portion engaging said container threads, and sealing means
- 6 within said upper cap portion sealing the open upper end of said
container neck.

3. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

- 2 said cap comprises an outer cap, and
- said combination includes an inner cap within said outer cap
- 4 removably secured to said container neck and sealing the open
upper end of said container neck.

4. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

- 2 said cap retaining means are flexible in a manner which permits
placement of said cap over said container neck but prevents
- 4 upward removal of the cap from the container neck.

5. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

- 2 said cap comprises an outer cap,
- said combination includes an inner cap within said outer cap
- 4 threaded on said container neck and sealing the open upper end of said container neck, and
- 6 said inner cap engages said outer cap for rotation of said inner cap by rotation of said outer cap.

6. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

- 2 said container neck has external screw threads between said shoulder and said upper neck end,
- 4 said cap side wall includes a rupture line which extends circumferentially about the cap side wall between said cap
- 6 portions,
- said closure includes means providing internal screw threads
- 8 within said upper cap portion engaging said container threads, whereby rotation of said cap in one direction relative to said
- 10 container with said cap retaining means in contact with said container shoulder urges said upper cap portion upwardly relative
- 12 to said lower cap portion and thereby stresses said rupture line, and

14 said cap is capable of being ruptured along said rupture line by said stress.

7. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

2 said container neck has external screw threads between said shoulder and said upper neck end,

4 said cap comprises an outer cap,

6 said combination includes an inner cap within said outer cap threaded on and sealing the open upper end of said container neck and engaging said upper portion of said outer cap for rotation of said inner cap by said outer cap,

8 said outer cap comprises a rupture line which extends 10 circumferentially about the outer cap side wall between said upper and lower portions of said outer cap,

12 rotation of said inner cap by said outer cap in a direction to unscrew said inner cap from the container with said cap retaining means in contact with said container shoulder urges said upper 14 portion of said outer cap upwardly relative to said lower portion of said outer cap and thereby stresses said rupture line, and 16

18 said outer cap is capable of being ruptured along said rupture line by said stress.

8. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

2 said junction means comprises a tear strip.

9. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

2 said cap retaining means comprise upwardly angled flexible
fingers spaced circumferentially about the lower end of said cap
4 side wall and extending inwardly from said cap side wall at an
oblique angle to the side wall and upwardly toward the upper end
6 of the cap, and

said fingers are flexible upwardly and outwardly toward the cap
8 side wall to permit the fingers to pass downwardly over said
container shoulder during placement of said cap on the container
10 neck to a position wherein said fingers engage the lower side of
said shoulder to prevent upward removal of said cap from the
12 container.

10. The combination of claim 1 wherein:

2 said cap comprises an outer cap,

said combination includes an inner cap within and engaging said
4 upper portion of said outer cap and threaded on said container
neck for sealing the open upper end of said neck.

6 said inner cap is rotatable by said outer cap,

said junction means comprises a tear strip,

8 said cap retaining means comprise upwardly angled flexible
fingers spaced circumferentially about the lower end of said
10 outer cap side wall and extending inwardly from said cap side
wall at an oblique angle to the side wall and upwardly toward the
12 upper end of the cap, and

said fingers are flexible upwardly and outwardly toward the cap
14 side wall in a manner which permits the fingers to pass
downwardly over said container shoulder during placement of said
16 outer cap on the container neck to a position wherein said
fingers engage the lower side of said shoulder to prevent upward
18 removal of the of the outer cap from said container neck.

11. The combination of claim 10 wherein:

2 rotation of said inner cap by said outer cap in a direction to
unscrew said inner cap from said container with said cap
4 retaining fingers in contact with said container shoulder urges
said upper portion of said outer cap upwardly relative to said
6 lower portion of said outer cap and thereby stresses said parting
region, and

8 said junction means further comprises a rupture line which
extends circumferentially about the cap side wall at said parting
10 region, and is capable of being ruptured by said stress.

12. A tamper-evident closure for a container including a normally
2 upper neck having an open normally upper end, and a
circumferential shoulder about said neck below said upper end
4 having a normally lower side, said closure comprising:

a cap to be positioned over said container neck including a
6 circumferential side wall having normally upper and lower ends,
an upper end wall joined to the upper end of said side wall and
8 closing the upper end of the cap, an opening in the lower end of
said cap circumferentially surrounded by the lower end of said
10 side wall, and cap retaining means on the lower end of said side
wall engagable with the lower side of said shoulder to prevent
12 upward removal of said cap from said container neck, and wherein

said cap side wall includes a parting region extending
14 circumferentially about said side wall between said side wall
ends at which the cap may be parted into upper and lower cap
16 portions, and junction means joining said cap portions along said
parting region to which a force may be applied to part said cap
18 along said region.

13. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

- 2 said container includes external screw threads between said shoulder and the upper end of said container neck, and
- 4 said closure includes internal screw threads within said upper cap portion for engaging said container threads, and sealing
- 6 means within said upper cap portion for sealing the open upper end of said container neck.

14. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

- 2 said cap comprises an outer cap, and
- said closure includes an inner cap within said outer cap to be
- 4 removably secured to said container neck for sealing the open upper end of the neck.

15. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

- 2 said cap retaining means comprise upwardly angled flexible fingers which permit placement of said cap over said container
- 4 neck but prevent upward removal of the cap from the container neck.

16 The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

2 said cap comprises an outer cap.

4 said closure includes an inner internally threaded cap within
said outer cap to be threaded on said container neck for sealing
the open upper end of the neck, and

6 said inner cap engages said outer cap for rotation of said inner
cap by rotation of said outer cap.

17. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

2 said container neck has external screw threads between said
shoulder and said upper neck end,

4 said cap has a rupture line extending circumferentially about
said cap side wall between said upper and lower cap portions.

6 said closure includes internal screw threads within said upper
cap portion for engaging said container threads, whereby when
8 said cap is mounted on said container neck with said cap
retaining means in contact with said container shoulder, rotation
10 of said cap in one direction urges said upper cap portion
upwardly relative to said lower cap portion and thereby stresses
12 said rupture line, and

14 said cap is capable of being ruptured along said rupture line by
said stress.

18. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

- 2 said container neck has external screw threads between said
 shoulder and said upper neck end,
- 4 said cap has a rupture line extending circumferentially about
 said cap side wall between said upper and lower cap portions,
- 6 said cap comprises an outer cap,

8 said closure comprises an inner cap within said outer cap to be
 threaded on said container neck for sealing the open upper end of
 the neck and engaging said upper portion of said outer cap in
10 such a way that said inner cap is rotatable by rotation of said
 outer cap, and rotation of said inner cap by said outer cap in a
12 direction to unscrew the inner cap from the container when said
 closure is mounted on said container neck with said cap retaining
14 means in contact with said container shoulder urges said upper
 portion of said outer cap upwardly relative to said lower portion
16 of said outer cap and thereby stresses said rupture line, and

18 said cap is capable of being ruptured along said rupture line by
 said stress.

19. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

- 2 said junction means comprises a tear strip.

20. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

2 said cap has a rupture line extending circumferentially about
said cap side wall between said upper and lower cap portions at
4 which said cap is adapted to be ruptured to separate said cap
portions by opposing axial forces acting on said cap portions
6 acting on said cap portions in directions to stress said rupture
line in tension.

21. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

2 said container neck has external screw threads between said
shoulder and said upper neck end,
4 said cap comprises an outer cap,
said closure includes an internally threaded inner cap within
6 said outer cap and adapted to be threaded on said container neck
for sealing the open upper end of the neck,
8 said junction means comprises a tear strip,

10 said cap retaining means comprise upwardly angled flexible
fingers spaced circumferentially about the lower end of said
outer cap side wall and extending inwardly from said cap side
12 wall at an oblique angle to the side wall and upwardly toward the
upper end of the cap, and

14 said fingers are flexible outwardly to permit the fingers to pass
downwardly over said container shoulder to a position wherein
16 said fingers engage the lower side of said shoulder and prevent
upward removal of the outer cap from said container neck.

22. The tamper-evident closure of claim 21 wherein:

2 said outer cap has a rupture line extending circumferentially
about said outer cap between said upper and lower portions of
4 said outer cap,

said inner cap engages said upper portion of said outer cap in
6 such a way that said inner cap is rotatable by rotation of said
outer cap, and rotation of said inner cap by said outer cap in a
8 direction to unscrew the inner cap from the container when said
closure is mounted on the container neck with said cap retaining
10 fingers in contact with said container urges said upper portion
of said outer cap upwardly relative to said lower portion of said
12 outer cap and thereby stresses said rupture line, and

said outer cap is capable of being ruptured along said rupture
14 line by said stress.

23. The combination according to claim 5 wherein:

2 said inner cap is fixed within said upper portion of said outer
cap..

24. The combination according to claim 5 wherein:

2 said inner cap is separable from said outer cap, and

said caps include engageable means limiting upward movement of
4 said inner cap within said outer cap.

25. The closure according to claim 18 wherein:

2 said inner cap is fixed within said upper portion of said outer
cap.

26. The closure according to claim 18 wherein:

2 said inner cap is separable from said outer cap, and

said caps include engageable means limiting upward movement of
4 said inner cap within said outer cap.

27. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

2 said junction means comprises a tear strip,

4 said cap has a rupture line extending circumferentially about
said cap side wall between said upper and lower cap portions at
which said cap is adapted to be ruptured to separate said cap
6 portions by opposing axial forces acting on said cap portions
in directions to stress said rupture line in tension.

8 said cap retaining means comprise upwardly angled flexible
fingers spaced circumferentially about the lower end of said
10 outer cap side wall and extending inwardly from said cap side
wall at an oblique angle to the side wall and upwardly toward
12 the upper end of the cap, and

14 said fingers are flexible outwardly to permit the fingers to
pass downwardly over said container shoulder to a position
wherein said fingers engage the lower side of said shoulder and
16 prevent upward removal of the outer cap from said container
neck.

28. The tamper-evident closure of claim 5 wherein:

2 said outer cap is configured and adapted for use as a
drinking vessel.

29. The tamper-evident closure of claim 10 wherein:

2 said outer cap is configured and adapted for use as a drinking vessel.

30. The tamper-evident closure of claim 12 wherein:

2 said cap is configured and adapted for use as a drinking vessel.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A tamper-evident closure for a container includes an outer tamper-evident cap engagable over an inner container sealing cap which may form part of the tamper-evident closure or part of the container, cap retaining prongs on the outer cap which permit placement of the outer cap on the container neck over the sealing cap but prevent upward removal of the outer cap from the container, a tear strip for severing the outer cap between its upper and lower ends to permit upward removal of the upper portion of the outer cap from the container, and a circumferential rupture line along which the outer cap separates to evidence tampering if an attempt is made to forcibly remove the outer cap from the container without tearing the tear strip from the outer cap.

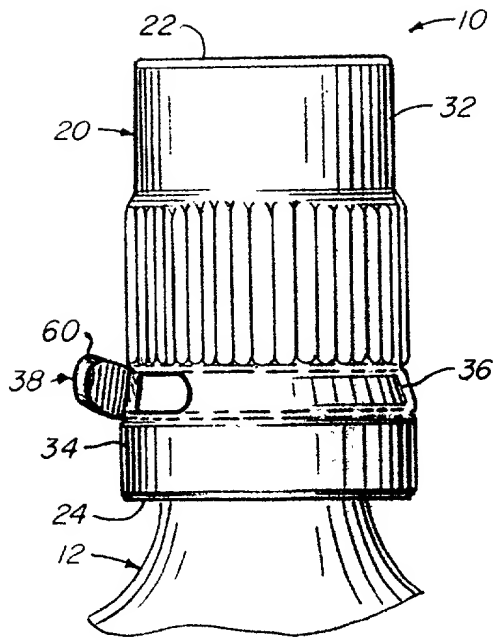


FIG. 1

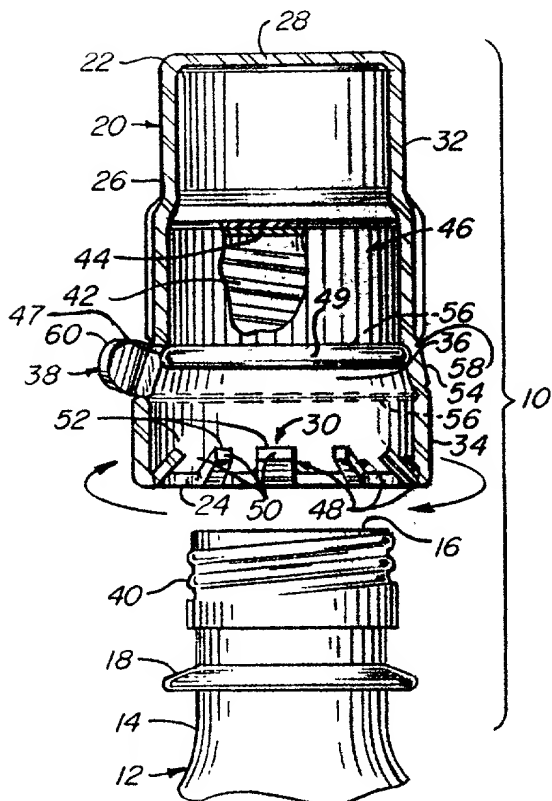


FIG. 2

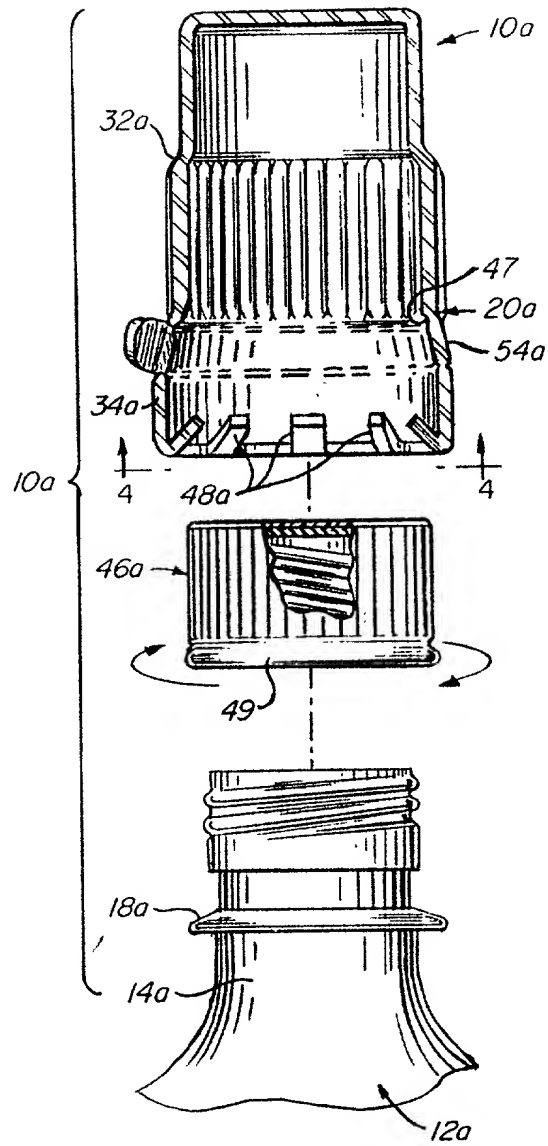


FIG. 3

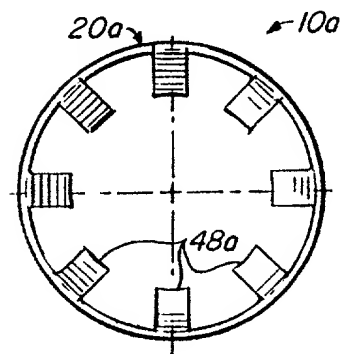


FIG. 4

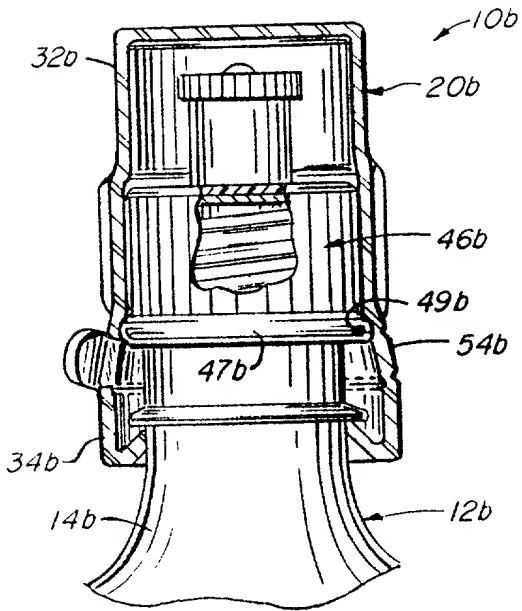


FIG. 5

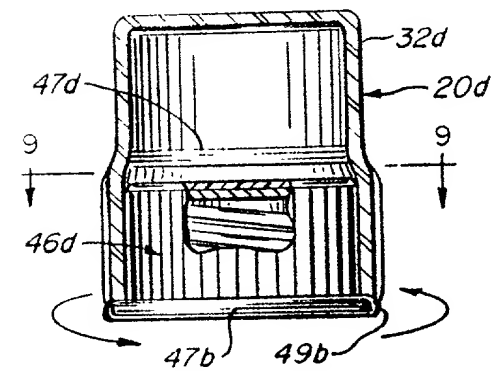


FIG. 6

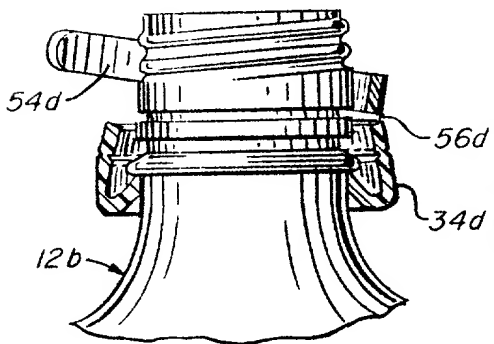


FIG. 7

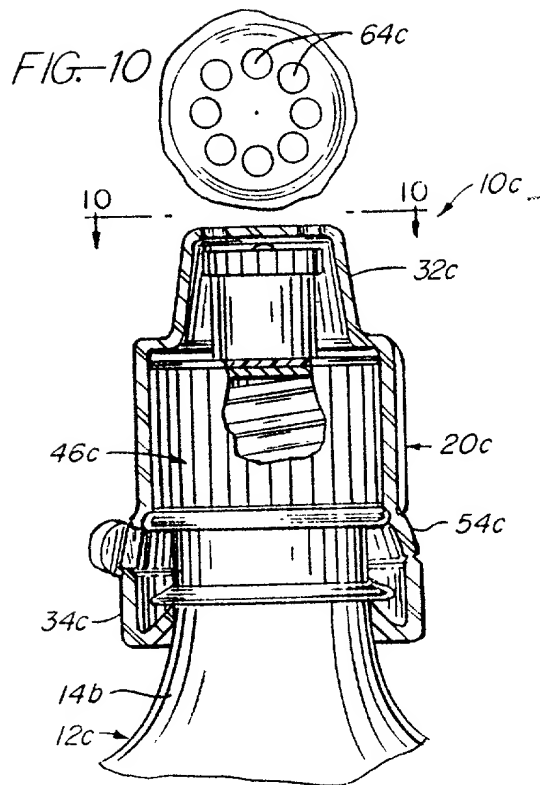


FIG. 8

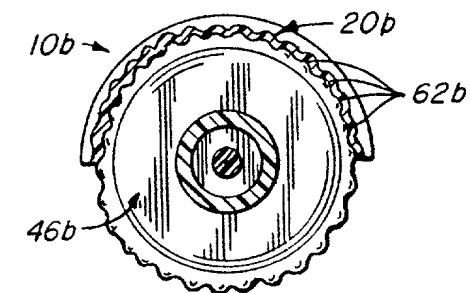
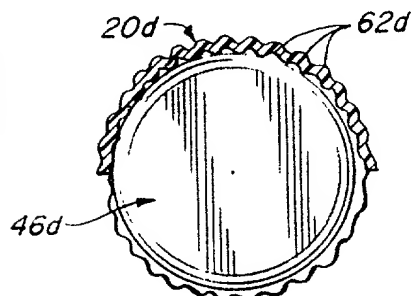
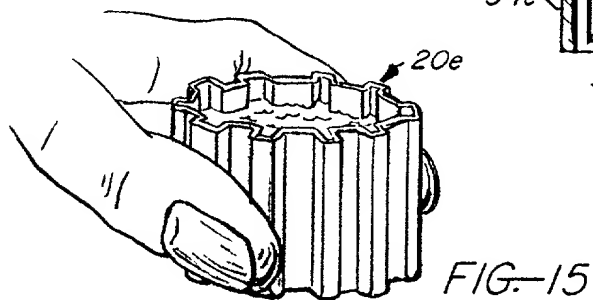
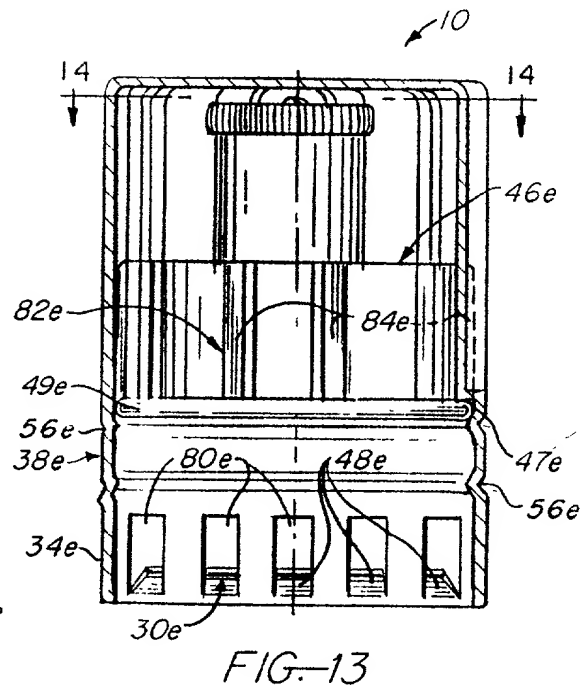
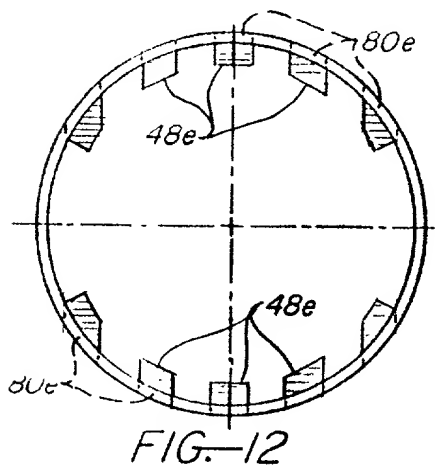
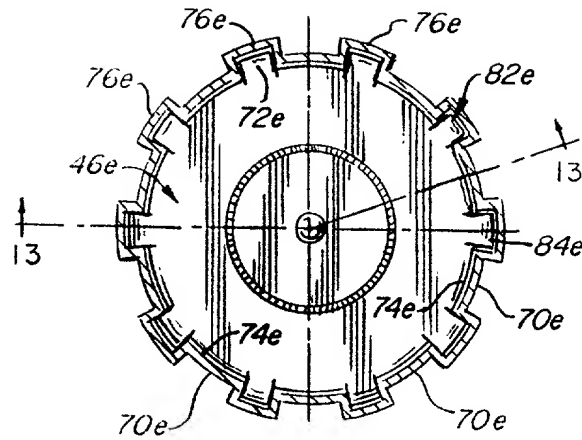
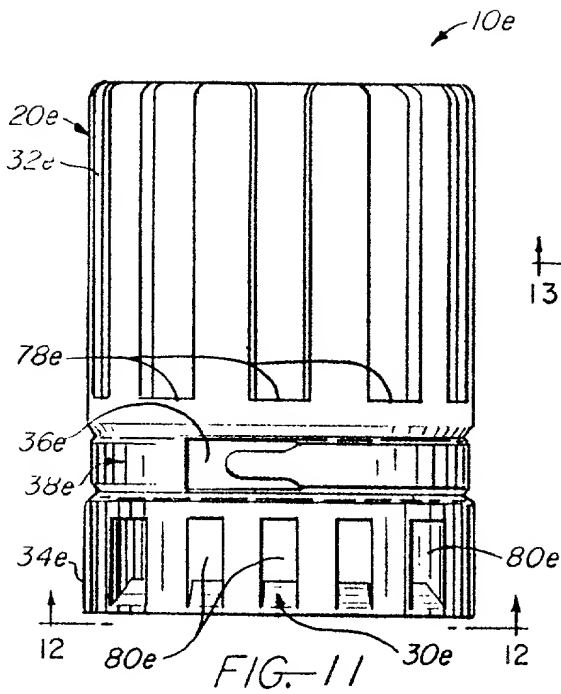


FIG. 9





DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

Sole/ Joint

Attorney's Docket No.

5507

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that
 My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.
 I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names
 are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

TAMPER-EVIDENT CONTAINER CLOSURE

the specification of which (check one)

☒ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on _____ as Application Serial No. _____ and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56 (a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

PRIOR FOREIGN APPLICATION(S)

| COUNTRY | APPLICATION NUMBER | DATE OF FILING (day, month, year) | PRIORITY Claimed Under 35 U.S.C. 119 |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| | | | YES ___ NO ___ |
| | | | YES ___ NO ___ |

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35 United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

PRIOR UNITED STATES APPLICATION(S)

| APPLICATION SERIAL NUMBER | FILING DATE | STATUS (PATENTED, PENDING, ABANDONED) |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true, and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

POWER OF ATTORNEY. As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith (list name and registration number)

Boniard I. Brown
 Regis. No. 17,940

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO | Boniard I. Brown 1500 West Covina Parkway West Covina, California 91790 -2793 | DIRECT TELEPHONE CALLS TO (name and telephone No.) (818) 338-0100 Boniard I. Brown |
|------------------------|---|---|

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Dated 11-25-87 | | Inventor's Signature <i>Paul H. Bennett</i> | |
| FULL NAME OF INVENTOR | Last Name BLUNNETT | First Name PAUL | Middle Name H. |
| CITY & STATE & COUNTRY | City San Dimas | State or Foreign Country California | Country of Citizenship United States |
| POST OFFICE ADDRESS | Street & No #108 441 W. Allen Ave, | City San Dimas | State or Country California Zip Code 91773 |
| Cofid | | Inventor's Signature | |
| FULL NAME OF INVENTOR | Last Name | First Name | Middle Name |
| CITY & STATE & COUNTRY | City | State or Foreign Country | Country of Citizenship United States |
| POST OFFICE ADDRESS | Street & No | City | State or Country Zip Code |